

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of breast cancer, comprising determining the presence, in a biological sample obtained from a patient suspected of suffering from breast cancer, of Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) that has been secreted by breast cancer tissue;

wherein the biological sample ~~comprises a substance selected from the group consisting of: blood, bone marrow, milk, cerebrospinal fluid and urine~~ is blood.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the presence of NGF is demonstrated by direct detection of NGF in said biological sample.

26. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the detection of NGF is carried out by an immunoassay or by mass spectrometry.

27-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the detection of NGF further comprises culturing NGF-sensitive cells in the presence of said biological sample.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) A method for the early diagnosis, screening, therapeutic follow-up and diagnosis of relapse in the case of breast cancer, comprising determining the presence, in a biological sample obtained from a patient who has been treated for breast cancer, of Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) that has been secreted by breast cancer tissue;

wherein the biological sample ~~comprises a substance selected from the group consisting of: blood, bone marrow, milk, cerebrospinal fluid, and urine~~ is blood.

32-36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the presence of the secreted NGF is demonstrated by indirect detection, in said biological sample, of the NGF.

38. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, wherein the indirect detection, in the biological sample, of the NGF that has been secreted by breast cancer tissue is carried out by the use of a ligand and an anti-ligand, wherein the ligand binds to the NGF.

39. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample does not contain breast cancer cells.